

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 337 057

FL 800 388

AUTHOR Broussard, Kathleen M.
TITLE After Phase II: A Needs Assessment Design Framework.
PUB DATE 5 Mar 91
NOTE 34p.; Master's Research Paper, Georgetown University.
PUB TYPE Dissertations/Theses - Undetermined (040) -- Tests/Evaluation Instruments (160)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *English (Second Language); Federal Legislation; *Immigrants; *Legal Problems; *Needs Assessment; Political Issues; *Questionnaires; *Second Language Instruction; Student Attitudes; Student Motivation; Student Needs
IDENTIFIERS Amnesty; *Immigration Reform and Control Act 1986

ABSTRACT

Under Phase II of the Immigration Reform and Control Act, eligible legalized aliens (ELAs) can become lawful permanent residents (LPRs) if they demonstrate English language competency or show that they are satisfactorily pursuing a course of study to obtain English language skills. Certain English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) programs have been approved by the Immigration and Naturalization Service and receive financial assistance to provide these services to ELAs. Since convincing students to stay in English classes even after free instruction ends at the end of fiscal year 1992, is a challenge, this report suggests a multi-faceted framework for needs assessment. It focuses on employers of ELA/LPRs, ESL service providers, and ELA/LPRs themselves. Semistructured interview questions for employers are provided, along with insights based on several telephone interviews about the role of service providers in needs assessment analysis. Interview techniques and sample questions for ELA/LPRs are also proposed. (Adjunct ERIC Clearinghouse on Literacy Education) (LB)

* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *

ED337057

After Phase II: A Needs Assessment Design Framework

**A Master's Research Paper
submitted for Ling 358, EFL Materials Preparation,
to Professor Peter H. Lowenberg
of the Graduate School of Georgetown University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Thirty-six Credit M.A.T. degree**

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS
MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Kathleen
Broussard

by

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES
INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)

☒ This document has been reproduced as
received from the person or organization
originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve
reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this docu-
ment do not necessarily represent official
OERI position or policy.

Kathleen M. Broussard

**Washington, D.C.
March 5, 1991**

BEST COPY AVAILABLE
2

FL800388

1.0 BACKGROUND

Pursuant to the promulgation of the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) on November 6, 1986 (Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, Pub.L. No. 99-603, 100 Stat. 3359 [partially codified in scattered sections of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952]), many United States programs providing English as a Second Language (ESL) services have become involved in its implementation. One of the provisions of IRCA established a program whereby aliens who had resided continuously in the United States in an illegal status since on or before January 1, 1982, could regularize their immigration status through the process of legalization, i.e., "amnesty." Legalization can eventually lead these aliens to naturalization as citizens of the United States.

Aliens seeking legalization under IRCA presented their initial applications to the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) during the Phase I period that extended from May 5, 1987, to May 4, 1988. Eligible legalized aliens (ELAs) accorded status as temporary residents during Phase I have applied to adjust their status from that of temporary resident to that of lawful permanent resident of the United States (LPR) during Phase II of the legalization process, which was to have extended from November 7, 1988, to November 1990.

Under a provision of the Immigration Act of 1990, however, ELAs have been granted a one-year extension in which to file for lawful permanent residency (Immigration Act of 1990, Pub.L. No. 101-649, 104 Stat. 4978). The *de facto* one-

year extension that had already been granted to many ELAs¹ has, therefore, become a *de jure* extension.

As part of the Phase II adjustment of status process, ELAs have been interviewed and, at that time, have had to demonstrate, *inter alia*, either "an understanding of the English language, including an ability to read, write, and speak words in ordinary usage in the English language" (Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952:§ 312(1)), or that they are "satisfactorily pursuing a course of study . . . to achieve such an understanding of English" (8 Code of Federal Regulations [8 C.F.R.] 1990:§ 245a.3(b)(4)(i)(B)).

2.0 INTRODUCTION

For the purposes of Phase II, certain ESL programs have been approved by the INS for legalization applicants to attend for a minimum of 40 hours of a 60-hour course in English and United States government to satisfy the satisfactory pursuit requirement (8 C.F.R. 1990:§ 245a.1(s)(1)). Even after Phase II ends, federal monies in the form of State Legalization Impact Assistance Grant (SLIAG) funds will be available through fiscal 1992, although this funding can be drawn on through fiscal 1994, to provide legalized aliens with educational services authorized under the Adult Education Act,² e.g., additional free English language classes.³

Convincing persons legalized under the provisions of IRCA to stay in English classes is a challenge currently facing ESL programs and is one that will persist, especially after the

free English classes end at the conclusion of fiscal 1992. The basic problem for these programs is now, and will continue to be, how to attract students and then how to keep them.

The purpose of this research proposal is to suggest a multi-faceted framework for needs assessment concerning additional English language instruction for the ELAs who have recently become LPRs under the provisions of IRCA (the ELA/LPRs). This needs assessment design will be approached on three fronts: 1) Employers of ELA/LPRs; 2) ESL service providers; and 3) ELA/LPRs themselves.

The framework provided has been designed specifically with the immediate SLIAG funding program in mind; however, it is hoped that the design is sufficiently general to be adaptable to a needs assessment of this same population when SLIAG funding ends.

3.0 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

With the implementation of the provisions of IRCA, especially with respect to its English-language requirements, local programs have had more students of a "lower educational level" since 1987.⁴ Many of these legalization-applicant students have attended ESL classes for the requisite 40 hours but then have not continued their studies.⁵

On the other hand, many have come to ESL classes for the requisite 40 hours and then have stayed and do continue to attend classes.⁶ Huss (1990:152) observes that "although no hard evidence is available from members of the ELA population,

it appears that they welcome the opportunity to attend school and to learn English." California Tomorrow has similarly estimated a "likely need and demand for educational services" (1989:23) based on ELAs who

may have come originally to meet the Immigration and Naturalization Service requirements and then stay on out of excitement about learning English. Others come with friends or family who "need" the courses and find themselves benefiting tremendously as well. Still others enroll just because for the first time they feel free to avail themselves of educational opportunity -- to learn English, to apply for citizenship, to develop their basic skills (1989:23).

It remains to be seen whether this trend will continue now that many ELAs have become LPRs. Indeed, a new area of concern for ESL programs serving this population will be how to serve the needs of the new ELA/LPRs, especially those persons who have not continued in their language study.

Now that the ELAs have satisfied the INS-stipulated English language requirement for the legalization program, the dilemma facing SLIAG-funded ESL programs is twofold: 1) how to get students to attend ESL classes now that their attendance is no longer required and 2) how to serve the English language needs of this ELA/LPR population. How can their needs be met both instructionally and logistically in such a way as to incorporate into the mainstream of United States society these persons who have previously existed as a shadow population?

The solution to 1) is based on the motivational level of the ELA/LPRs. As evidenced by their very applications for

legalization, these people somehow felt that becoming legalized would help them intrinsically. Following this same line of reasoning, we can assume that mastery of English beyond the minimum requirement will also benefit them intrinsically. In addition, it was possible for ELAs to take and pass an INS exam at the time of their application for LPR status, which would have obviated their having to take a citizenship test should they eventually become naturalized (Huss 1990). However, as Wrigley and Brady have pointed out (1989:21):

With few exceptions, all permanent residents must pass an English and civics test to acquire U.S. citizenship. There is no 40 hour class attendance as an alternative. Thus, in a few years schools may see their amnesty students returning to them -- and this time, the students must take the time to acquire functional English and basic literacy skills as well as knowledge of U.S. history and government sufficient to pass a test (1989:21).

The solution to 2) is based on the ELA/LPRs' motivational level as well, in that additional mastery of English will also allow them to get ahead in English-speaking United States society. For additional language training programs to be successful, therefore, the ELA/LPRs must perceive that additional language training will be to their advantage. If a program does not meet their perceived needs, these adult students simply will not participate in additional language classes.

4.0 MEANS OF NEEDS ASSESSMENT OF THE ELA POPULATION

There is certainly no dearth of literature available on needs assessment, although much of the available literature is not oriented in such a way as to be a useful resource for the evaluation of the needs of ELA/LPRs.

For example, Munby's Communicative Needs Processor (CNP) model (1978) has long been considered a classic in the field of needs assessment; yet, as Nunan points out, "while the Munby model might be quite adequate for providing objective information for content specification, it fails to provide the sort of subjective information which is at the heart of the learner-centred procedures for curriculum design" (1988:24).

In the operation of the CNP,

the input . . . which consists of base-line information on a L2 participant (individual or stereotype) is successively processed . . . [and] the results from the processing . . . are written out as the profile of communication needs for that particular participant (Munby 1978:34; italics added).

To ensure the participation of the targeted population in additional language classes, the adult ELA/LPRs for whom this design proposal is being developed must feel that these additional language classes will benefit them personally, i.e., these classes must have perceived personal relevance. In meeting this criterion, information on this population is of secondary importance to information collected from the population itself either directly, or indirectly from employers or ESL service providers.

"In preparing responsible educational programs for amnesty applicants [extending to the ELA/LPRs], service providers . . . need to . . . understand applicants' overall needs, including short term (legalization) and long term goals" (Consortium on Employment Communication 1989:1). In fact, it may be that understanding the applicants' overall needs should begin with our turning to their own specification of what they feel would be of the most benefit to them in their classes (see Ramani, et al., 1988).

SLIAG-funded ESL programs must be able to serve the perceived English language needs of the ELA/LPR population. Despite appeals to the ELA/LPRs' level of instrumental motivation, the ELA/LPRs may not necessarily know how additional language classes are going to help them get ahead. At the onset of needs assessment, therefore, questioning the ELA/LPRs directly about their needs, e.g., in an interview or questionnaire, may not be very revealing, either because the ELA/LPRs are not going to know or because they are going to say what they feel the questioner wants to hear. To begin the needs assessment process, it may initially prove more useful to consult outside sources to gain a more global perspective. The ELA/LPRs may be too close to the problem to view it objectively.

The greatest general needs for the ELA population, including ELA/LPRs, appear to include their occupational and literacy needs.⁷ Indeed, it seems that their literacy needs

are part of their occupational needs. And who better to ask about their occupational needs than their employers?

4.1 ELA/LPR NEEDS ASSESSMENT THROUGH EMPLOYERS

Using the ethnographic approach advocated by Ramani, et al., to assess the English language needs of the ELA/LPR population seems to "reflect more accurately the practices of particular target communities" (1988:83). For the fieldwork associated with the development of the needs assessment, the suggestion of Ramani, et al., that "unstructured field work . . . designed to overcome the biased perceptions of the outsider analysts, is perhaps the best starting point" (1988:84) is intuitively satisfying; however, to avoid eliminating potentially useful data, especially from interviews conducted at the beginning of the study, an open-ended or semistructured interview script was prepared, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1

OPEN-ENDED OR SEMISTRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR EMPLOYERS

1. In what department of your business do you employ the greatest number of limited English proficient ("LEP") speakers?
2. Approximately how many LEP persons do you employ?
3. What are the language backgrounds of these LEP persons?
4. What do these LEP persons have to use English for on the job?

5. What are the biggest problems caused by an employee's not being proficient in English?
6. What additional English training areas would be of the most benefit to your employees who are LEP, i.e., what would help them perform their jobs more effectively?

The idea of unstructured or semistructured fieldwork involving employers was intuitively and intellectually satisfying and seemed the most effective way to determine the real additional English language needs of the ELA/LPR population. In practice, however, this approach was not particularly successful, although it did point me in a more productive direction (see 4.2, below).

The open-ended or semistructured fieldwork was originally intended to be a means of collecting empirical data by actually interviewing targeted employers prior to the preparation of a pilot questionnaire for employers, but this approach was so unproductive that I had to abandon it entirely. Whether out of fear or due to time constraints, employers proved to be elusive respondents: telephone calls were not returned and appointments were not kept. The data collected from the attempted open-ended/semistructured interviews are summarized below.

Semistructured interview 1

On Saturday, October 6, 1990, an interview was scheduled at approximately 10:30 A.M., for 12:00 P.M., with Claudia, the manager of The Taco House, 515 South 23rd Street, Arlington, Virginia 22202, (703) 979-7033. The manager did not keep the appointment. She happened to call in to the restaurant when I returned for the appointment, and she said she was no longer interested in speaking to me.

The manager appeared to be in her early thirties, Hispanic, and limited English proficient (LEP) herself. At the time the interview was scheduled, I initiated the conversation in English, and the manager responded in English; however, I noted that all other business-related conversation in the restaurant was in Spanish.

Semistructured interview 2

On Saturday, October 6, 1990, at approximately 12:15 P.M., Tony Flores, the owner of Leslie's Cafe, 558 South 23rd Street, Arlington, Virginia 22202, (703) 271-8817, made arrangements to call me on Monday, October 8, 1990, when the restaurant would be closed, to discuss the issue of English training for employees. On Monday, October 8, when the owner had not called as he had said he would, I called the restaurant at approximately 12:30 P.M. and at approximately 4:50 P.M. and left messages for him, neither of which was returned.

The owner appeared to be in his late thirties and a Hispanic NNS himself, although not LEP. At the time the interview was scheduled, I initiated the conversation in English, and the owner responded in English. In fact, when I switched into Spanish, the owner continued to speak in English.

I met the owner by first talking to a waiter in the restaurant. This waiter appeared to be in his late thirties and a LEP Hispanic himself. He seemed to be able to perform the basic mechanical functions of his job as a waiter in English; however, when I spoke to him in English, his apparent non-comprehension caused me to switch into Spanish.

Semistructured interview 3

On Saturday, October 6, 1990, at approximately 12:30 P.M., I spoke with two ladies working in the Crystal Cleaners, 562 South 23rd Street, Arlington, Virginia 22202, (703) 920-5333. One was working behind the counter and the other was doing clothing alterations at a sewing table in front of the counter. Both women appeared to be in their mid-twenties and LEP Koreans.

They told me that lack of English proficiency is not a problem in their business. When communication breaks down, there are people they can turn to for help, e.g., neighboring businesses. Since neither woman appeared to be involved in the business in a managerial or supervisory capacity, their

perceptions that lack of English proficiency is not a problem may not be a feeling shared by their bosses or by others in the business working in above basic entry-level capacities.

The women seemed to be able to perform the mechanical functions of their jobs acceptably, even considering that they were LEP; however, they both seemed to have trouble when presented with situations outside the scope of their mechanical English-language skills. For example, neither appeared to understand my questions and, in fact, asked if I was looking for a job. It would seem, therefore, that lack of English proficiency in employees of service-oriented businesses would be problematic for the effective and efficient functioning of the business, especially in dealing with English-speaking customers.

Semistructured interview 4

On Sunday, October 7, 1990, at approximately 10:15 A.M., I spoke with Starlene Edmunson, the store manager at the McDonald's restaurant at 2620 Jefferson Davis Highway, Arlington, Virginia 22202, (703) 683-2107. In the metropolitan Washington, D.C., area, including Northern Virginia, McDonald's has audio training tapes in both English and Spanish. However, jobs in McDonald's restaurants that do not require contact with the public are available for employees with language limitations, e.g., grill positions. For additional assistance in training, LEP employees can be

paired with more experienced employees of their own language background. LEP employees gradually manage to learn some English, however, from exposure to it on the job. For example, they learn the difference between "Small" and "Large" sized drinks.

I first met the store manager by talking to an employee emptying trash cans in the restaurant. This employee appeared to be in his late twenties and an Ethiopian NNS. When I asked to speak to the "shift manager," the employee responded with a confirmation check, "The store manager?" Although his English may not be at a level that would permit him to work behind the counter, it, nevertheless, is advanced enough that this employee can help customers on a more limited basis, e.g., customers who ask for the manager as opposed to those who order an entire meal.

The store manager was an African American and appeared to be in her early thirties and a native speaker of English. Most of the McDonald's employees working the counter were either African Americans or Asians.

For more detailed information on McDonald's training programs, the store manager suggested that I call McDonald's main D.C. metro area office. Pursuant to this suggestion, I called the D.C. metro area McDonald's training manager, Matt Gutberlet, twice during the afternoon of Monday, October 8, 1990. A message was left for him at approximately 4:50 P.M.; however, he never answered it.

Because the employer open-ended/semistructured fieldwork did not yield information that would assist in the design of a pilot questionnaire to assess employers' needs, the pilot questionnaire for employers presented in Table 2 mainly draws on inferences from other sources, as noted below.

Table 2

PILOT QUESTIONNAIRE FOR EMPLOYERS

1. How important is it to you that your employees are able to use the following six general skill areas to perform their jobs effectively? Please rank these areas on a scale where skill area #1 is the Most Important and skill area #6 is the Least Important.

An employee of mine should:

- _____ Be able to learn the particular skills associated with the performance of his/her job.
- _____ Have basic reading, writing, and computation skills.
- _____ Be able to communicate with others, including both listening and oral communication skills.
- _____ Have the ability to solve problems and think creatively.
- _____ Have self-esteem; be able to set goals; be interested in personal/career growth.
- _____ Have good interpersonal skills; be a team player; be able to contribute to the success of the business; be able to assume leadership responsibilities.

(Based on Carnevale, Anthony P., Gainer, Leila J., Meltzer, Ann S. (1988). *Workplace basics: The skills employers want*. Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office (pp. 8-16).)

2. Approximately what percent of your limited English proficient ("LEP") employees have the following problems on the job:

1. Understanding occupation-related vocabulary: _____ %
2. Understanding rules and regulations: _____ %
3. Following oral instructions: _____ %
4. Asking questions for clarification: _____ %
5. Reading written materials,
e.g., memoranda, instructions: _____ %
6. Writing in English: _____ %
7. Having confidence in own ability to speak
English: _____ %
8. Relating well with supervisors and
co-workers: _____ %

(Adapted from Arlington Education and Employment Program
(Undated). *Hotel Survey - Workplace Literacy.*)

3. How do the problem areas explored in #2 relate to the employees' lack of the general skill areas that you have identified as being important to you in #1?

4. What areas of additional English language training would be most beneficial to your LEP employees, especially with respect to increasing their effectiveness and efficiency on the job?

As has already been noted, approaching employers to enlist their assistance in needs assessment for their employees did not yield productive results. Before speaking with the employers, I had assumed that they would be able to articulate the English language needs of their employees; however, this limited data collection provides evidence to support the position that employers may not necessarily be an informative source for assessing employee needs.

Employers may have been afraid to speak with an uncredentialed graduate student researcher. On the other hand, employers are very time conscious and instrumentally motivated in that they would have needed to have been able to see an immediate benefit that their cooperation would have ensured. Helping develop their employees' proficiency in English would be a project with long-term, as opposed to immediate, short-term, benefits for them; therefore, employers may not have perceived their participation in this study to be an efficient use of their time as businesspeople.

If a researcher could obtain external validation for the purpose of investigation, e.g., from a local Chamber of Commerce, employers would be more likely to cooperate and become a valuable source of information. Absent this backing, however, the theoretical ideal of such a study crumbles in a practical context.

A suggested format for a credentialed assessment of ELA/LPR needs through employers would proceed as

follows: 1) Open-ended interviews or semistructured interviews (Table 1) are conducted, especially for the unexpected information they could yield; 2) Answer patterns from the interviews are utilized to develop a pilot questionnaire (Table 2) for a restricted sampling of employers; 3) A revised questionnaire is developed based on the responses to the pilot questionnaire; 4) Selected interviews are conducted based on responses to the revised questionnaire, especially with respect to unexpected information (Table 3).

Table 3 suggests questions that could be adapted for use in selected interviews based on responses to the revised questionnaire. Answers to these types of questions would be significant in an employer-based needs assessment.

Table 3

FOLLOW-UP INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR EMPLOYERS BASED ON RESPONSES TO Table 2 QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Do limited English proficient ("LEP") employees require closer supervision?
2. Do they have less job-flexibility?
3. Do you have to use interpreters? (How often? How much time does such interpretation take?)
4. Is employment turnover high?
5. Are there safety problems?
6. Are there facets of the job that are difficult to communicate to LEP employees?
7. Are records accurate?

8. Are there misunderstandings with native English-speakers?
9. How well do LEP employees understand the business?
10. What happens when there are breakdowns and emergencies?
11. Are there good workers who cannot progress in the company because of their limited English proficiency?
12. Are your LEP employees less motivated than you would like?
13. Does the training you give assume a certain level of English proficiency?

(Adapted from Jupp, T.C. and Hodlin, Susan. (1978). *Industrial English: An example of theory and practice in functional language teaching for elementary learners*. London: Heinemann Educational Books, Ltd. (pp. 39-40).)

This follow-up interview should seek to determine to what extent the employees' limited English proficiency is a cause of any of these problems.

It would then be interesting and informative to conclude the employer component of the needs assessment with a limited number of ethnographic case studies by linguistic professionals to evaluate empirically employee needs for English in an on-the-job context (see Schmidt 1981:199-210; Jupp and Hodlin 1978:40-2; Flowerdew 1986:127-8).

4.2 ELA/LPR NEEDS ASSESSMENT THROUGH SERVICE PROVIDERS

At the beginning of this project, service providers were consulted for an introduction to the field of needs assessment in an ESL context. After the failure of approaching ELA/LPR needs assessment through employers, I returned to information obtained from service providers. In fact, service providers

have been recommended as a resource to assist in the analysis of student needs (Language and Orientation Resource Center 1982). Approaching the service providers has the added advantage of providing us with access to linguistic professionals who also are able to see the real world problems their LEP students encounter in an English-speaking culture.

ESL service providers are not a population to be surveyed using the needs assessment instruments developed in this proposal. These ESL service providers have, nevertheless, helped bridge the gap between the perceived needs of the employer population and the perceived needs of the ELA/LPR population: the service providers have direct contact with the ELA/LPRs they teach and at least indirect contact with the employers of these ELA/LPRs, i.e., their ESL programs transmit to LEP persons language knowledge which can, in turn, assist these LEP persons in the performance of their jobs in an English-speaking society.

ESL service providers have furnished valuable insights in interviews conducted personally and over the telephone. In addition, these ESL service providers have been the source of needs assessment instruments that have actually been used successfully in a real world context and have been adapted in the design of this proposal.

The following observations are summarized from the interviews with ESL service providers. These observations are not mentioned elsewhere in this proposal; however, they are

worth noting because of the orientation they provide to the entire ESL issue, especially as it relates to the contents of this design proposal.

According to Sr. Charlotte, Coordinator, Hogar Hispano of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Arlington, Virginia (personal communication), her program is seeing more immigrants now with more basic level needs than in the past. To this end, pre-literacy issues represent a developing emphasis in Hogar Hispano's programs, which extend beyond language needs to general ministry to the needs of Hispanic Roman Catholics in Northern Virginia. Hogar Hispano's ESL programs emphasize survival English and English through communication issues.

Needs analysis at the Spanish Education Development Center (SED) is conducted informally and orally at the start of each ESL course by speaking with the students according to Celia Wiehe of SED (personal communication). This needs assessment format has been chosen partially because of the low literacy levels of many of the students and partially because of the emphasis on conversation in language classes at SED.

Additionally interviewed ESL service providers include Suzanne Grant, ESL Coordinator,⁸ Susan Huss, Volunteer Coordinator,⁹ and Elaine Squeri, Coordinator, Workplace Literacy,¹⁰ all of the Arlington Education and Employment Program; and Elaine Bausch¹¹ and Susan Joyner,¹² both of the Fairfax County, Virginia, Adult English as a Second Language program.

4.3 ELA/LPR NEEDS ASSESSMENT THROUGH ELA/LPRs THEMSELVES

The final stage in the needs assessment process for this proposal involves the ELA/LPRs themselves. Although a language program may be pedagogically sound, the students of the program must perceive that the English language training available to them will somehow benefit them personally. That is, what do students feel their English language needs are, both instructionally and logistically?

Cognizant of the reality that one's immigration status is a highly personal, and often highly sensitive issue, the assessment instruments to survey the ELA/LPR population in this proposal have been prepared indirectly, primarily by adapting information furnished by ESL service providers. This proposal represents the initial design phase; therefore, the research involved in the design of this section of the proposal has not included direct contact with ELA/LPRs. A suggested format for a credentialed assessment of ELA/LPR needs through ELA/LPRs themselves would proceed as follows:

- 1) Open-ended interviews or semistructured interviews (Table 4) are conducted, especially for the unexpected information they could yield;
- 2) Answer patterns from the interviews are utilized to develop a pilot questionnaire (Table 5) for a restricted sampling of ELA/LPRs;
- 3) Based on the responses to the pilot questionnaire, a revised questionnaire is developed for wider distribution to ELA/LPRs;
- 4) Selected interviews and/or ethnographic case studies are

conducted based on responses to the revised questionnaire, especially with respect to the unexpected information provided.

From a logistical standpoint, this needs assessment design framework is most practical for surveying those ELA/LPRs who are currently taking ESL classes. It should be noted, however, that the needs of the ELA/LPRs who are not currently taking ESL classes are equally significant in this analysis. In other words, for what reasons, both instructional and logistical, is this latter group of ELA/LPRs not taking advantage of additional English classes?

Effective methods of reaching out to those ELA/LPRs not currently taking ESL classes are definitely needed and, indeed, represent an area of major consideration at the present time. These outreach methods extend beyond the scope of the present research proposal, although direct outreach to ELA/LPRs would be best because of its more personal nature. Using information provided on language class registration forms may prove valuable in direct outreach, especially in locating the ELA/LPRs who no longer attend classes but would be useful resources to consult in the implementation of this proposal.

Indirect outreach, however, may prove to be most practical. This indirect outreach could take the forms of: 1) radio and television announcements; 2) announcements in community newspapers and other print media; 3) posters and,

when applicable, oral announcements at community centers; 4) posters, oral announcements, and written announcements at community churches; and/or 5) flyers sent home to the parents of school-aged children. The indirect outreach should be conducted bilingually to the extent possible.

The needs assessment instruments described in this proposal would be appropriate for surveying the needs of available ELA/LPRs. It is hoped that questions posed to the ELA/LPRs who can be surveyed at this time will also provide information on those who are not. Based on a profile of ELA/LPR needs as developed by using the needs assessment instruments in this proposal, relevant additional language curricula can then be developed that account for both the learning and target needs of the ELA/LPR population in general.

At this stage of the needs assessment process, the open-ended interviews or semistructured interviews (Table 4) may be the most revealing because many of the ELA/LPRs who will actually be surveyed still have very limited English proficiency themselves. In this way, bilingual support for these interviews may assist in the elicitation of information. Table 4 suggests questions for use in these open-ended or semistructured interviews.

Table 4

OPEN-ENDED OR SEMISTRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR ELA/LPRs
THEMSELVES

Instructional needs, i.e., learning needs:

1. In what areas of your life do you have the greatest need to be able to communicate in English, including both understanding and being understood?
2. What are some examples of ways in which you need to use English in these areas?
3. What are some of the problems you face because of your English language limitations?
4. What additional English training would be of the most benefit to you, i.e., instruction in which areas (communicating effectively in English with your boss or landlord, for example) would make your life easier?

Logistical needs, i.e., target needs:

5. What kind of a class schedule would fit in best with your lifestyle, e.g., "morning classes from 9:00 A.M. to 12:00 P.M., three days per week on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays"?
 6. Do you have commitments or other responsibilities that make it difficult for you to attend a regularly scheduled class, e.g., "I work from 3:00 P.M. to 11:30 P.M., and can only attend morning classes"?
 7. Do you have other problems in attending a regularly scheduled class, e.g., childcare or transportation?
 8. Do you have any limited English proficient friends or family members who would like to attend English class but are not able to for whatever reason? Describe why they cannot attend a class, e.g., classes meet at inconvenient times; conflicts with job schedule; problems with childcare or transportation.
-

An ELA/LPR pilot questionnaire can then be developed (Table 5), especially by utilizing unexpected information yielded in the open-ended or semistructured interviews. A revised questionnaire can follow for wider distribution to ELA/LPRs based on responses to the pilot questionnaire.

Table 5

PILOT QUESTIONNAIRE FOR ELA/LPRs THEMSELVES

1. I need to learn to speak more English to (rank all that apply in order of importance [1=most important; 9=least important]):

- _____ Talk on the telephone
- _____ Talk to my neighbors and friends
- _____ Talk to my children's teachers
- _____ Talk to my co-workers and supervisors
- _____ Talk to emergency service providers like the police, fire department, or medical personnel
- _____ Talk to people I come into contact with in my daily life like my apartment manager, bus drivers, tellers at the bank, employees at the post office
- _____ Get a job
- _____ Continue my education
- _____ Other (please specify): _____

2. I need to learn to read more English to read (rank all that apply in order of importance [1=most important; 11=least important]):

- _____ Medicine labels
- _____ Bus schedules

- _____ Newspapers
- _____ Job advertisements
- _____ Housing advertisements
- _____ Bills
- _____ Maps
- _____ Food ads and labels
- _____ Instructions and directions
- _____ For pleasure or enjoyment
- _____ Other (please specify): _____

3. I need to learn to write more English to write (rank all that apply in order of importance [1=most important; 12=least important]):

- _____ Checks
- _____ Job applications
- _____ Other types of applications, e.g., loan applications, credit card applications
- _____ Forms at the doctor's office
- _____ Job reports
- _____ Forms at my school
- _____ Forms at my children's schools
- _____ Forms at the bank
- _____ Forms at the post office
- _____ Forms for insurance
- _____ Other forms (please specify): _____
- _____ Other (please specify): _____

4. In an English class, I would want to practice (rank all that apply in order of importance [1=most important; 8=least important]):

_____ Conversation
_____ Pronunciation
_____ Listening
_____ Grammar
_____ Reading
_____ Writing
_____ Idioms and vocabulary
_____ Other (please specify): _____

5. What other things would you like to do in an English class?

(Adapted from Fairfax County, Virginia, Adult English as a Second Language (Undated). Student needs assessment instrument.)

6. Do you have any limited English proficient friends or family members who would like to attend English class but are not able to for whatever reason? Describe why they cannot attend a class, e.g., classes meet at inconvenient times; conflicts with job schedule; problems with childcare or transportation.

A limited number of personal interviews with ELA/LPRs might be an informative follow-up to the revised questionnaire. To conclude the ELA/LPR component of the needs assessment, it would then be interesting and informative for linguistic professionals to conduct a limited number of ethnographic case studies involving ELA/LPRs to investigate empirically the needs of ELA/LPRs for English in the context of their daily lives.

5.0 CONCLUSION

As Jupp and Hodlin have noted (1978:38),

in order to make the learners' needs central to his plans and decisions, a teacher must involve himself fully in the learners' situation. It is essential for the teacher to investigate and experience the social reality of a . . . [learner's life] before he can make choices about what language functions a learner in that situation needs and what linguistic skills these involve.

Indeed, the needs assessment design framework presented in this proposal has been oriented towards involvement in learners' lives to provide a clearer look at the learner prior to additional English language training. Finding out what learners' needs are is the essential first step in designing a course with a corresponding syllabus that is both relevant to the learners' lives and will provide them with the linguistic knowledge they need to participate in, in fact, simply exist, in an English-speaking culture.

Without a *a priori* needs analysis, program, curriculum, course, and subsequent syllabus design at best rest on an unstable foundation. In education as in real life, the cart logically follows the horse.

The needs assessment framework explicated in this research proposal is presently an academic exercise; however, it is hoped that the design will be suitable for implementation in a real world context, especially by ESL programs providing English language services to the recently legalized population.

Through legalization, IRCA presented undocumented aliens in the United States with the opportunity of a lifetime. In the same way, additional English language training will allow the ELA/LPRs to build on this opportunity and improve themselves through education, a gateway to fuller participation in mainstream United States society.

NOTES

¹Personal communication with Susan Joyner, Coordinator of State Legalization Impact Assistance Grants (SLIAG), Adult English as a Second Language, Department of Vocational, Adult, and Community Education, Fairfax County Public Schools. Fairfax County, Virginia.

²Personal communication with David Howe, Health and Human Services Deputy Director of Division of State Legalization Assistance.

³Personal communication with Susan Joyner.

⁴Personal communication with Suzanne Grant, ESL Coordinator, Arlington Education and Employment Program, Adult and Career Education, Arlington Public Schools. Arlington County, Virginia.

⁵Personal communication with Suzanne Grant.

⁶Personal communication with Elaine Squeri, Coordinator, Workplace Literacy, Arlington Education and Employment Program, Adult and Career Education, Arlington Public Schools. Arlington County, Virginia.

⁷Personal communication with Susan Joyner.

⁸See note 4.

⁹Personal communication with Susan Huss, Volunteer Coordinator, Arlington Education and Employment Program, Adult and Career Education, Arlington Public Schools. Arlington County, Virginia.

¹⁰See note 6.

¹¹Personal communication with Elaine Bausch, Adult English as a Second Language, Department of Vocational, Adult, and Community Education, Fairfax County Public Schools. Fairfax County, Virginia.

¹²See note 1.

REFERENCES

- Arlington Education and Employment Program. Undated. *Hotel Survey - Workplace Literacy*. Adult and Career Education, Arlington Public Schools. Arlington County, Virginia.
- California Tomorrow. 1989. *Out of the shadows: The IRCA/SLIAG opportunity*. San Francisco: California Tomorrow Commission Report 89-10.
- Carnevale, Anthony P., Gainer, Leila J., Meltzer, Ann S. 1988. *Workplace basics: The skills employers want*. Washington: United States Government Printing Office.
- 8 Code of Federal Regulations. 1990. Part 245a.
- Consortium on Employment Communication. 1989. *Teach the students, not the book: A curriculum guide for preparing language minority adults for legalization*. Long Beach: Immigration Reform Language Issues Network.
- Fairfax County, Virginia, Adult English as a Second Language. Undated. Student needs assessment instrument.
- Flowerdew, John. 1986. Cognitive style and specific-purpose course design. *English for Specific Purposes* 5(2):121-129.
- Huss, Susan. 1990. The education requirement of the U.S. Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986: A case study of ineffective language planning. *Language Problems and Language Planning* 14(2):142-161.
- Immigration Act of 1990, Pub.L. No. 101-649, 104 Stat. 4978.
- Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 (INA), Pub.L. No. 82-414, 66 Stat. 163 (codified as amended at 8 U.S.C. §§ 1101-1524).
- Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (IRCA), Pub.L. No. 99-603, 100 Stat 3359 (partially codified in scattered sections of the INA).
- Jupp, T.C. and Hodlin, Susan. 1978. *Industrial English: An example of theory and practice in functional language teaching for elementary learners*. London: Heinemann Educational Books, Ltd.

- Language and Orientation Research Center. 1982. *Teaching ESL to competencies: A departure from a traditional curriculum for adult learners with specific needs*, Refugee Education Guide, Adult Education Series #12. Washington: Center for Applied Linguistics.
- Munby, John. 1978. *Communicative syllabus design*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Nunan, David. 1988. *The learner-centred curriculum*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ramani, Esther, Chacko, Thomas, Singh, S.J., and Glendinning, Eric H. 1988. An ethnographic approach to syllabus design: A case study of the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore. *English for Specific Purposes* 7:81-90.
- Schmidt, Maxine F. 1981. Needs assessment in English for Specific Purposes: The case study. In *English for Academic and Technical Purposes*, L. Selinker, E. Tarone and V. Hanzeli (Eds.). Rowley: Newbury House Publishers, Inc.
- Wrigley, Heide Spruck and Brady, Katherine A. 1989. *Making amnesty work: Joint efforts to meet the needs of newly legalized aliens*. San Francisco/Long Beach: Immigrant Legal Resource Center/Consortium on Employment Communication.